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Mexico's Multimission Force for Internal Security

by Dr. Graham H. Turbiville, Jr.
Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, KS.



Militaries around the world are restructuring in response to new operational environments that blur distinctions between national security and public safety. More often than not, force restructuring efforts are carried out under severe resource constraints and amid complex legal and human rights issues generated by broadened civil-support missions. South of the United States in Mexico, a new force—composed of police, military and national intelligence components—has formed and expanded since the concept was first proposed in late 1998. This new organization—the Federal Preventive Police (*Policía Federal Preventiva* or PFP)—has acquired the mandate, resources and missions to transform the way Mexico deals with its most pressing security concerns.

Mexico's growing and often violent security challenges—drug trafficking, illegal alien smuggling on land and maritime borders, violent street crime, other organized crime and proliferating armed guerrilla groups and their activities—have been well documented.¹ Since even Mexican officials characterize law enforcement establishments at federal, state and local levels as demonstrably corrupt and inefficient, the Mexican government has turned increasingly to the armed forces to lead and man key police organizations around the country. These duties distract the military from its main missions—including dealing with insurgent activities in a growing number of Mexican states—and bringing soldiers of all ranks into increasingly direct contact with the corrupting influence of narcotrafficking in its most pernicious forms.

The far wider deployment of Mexican army units conducting counterdrug and illegal immigrant patrols close to the US-Mexican border also surfaced a longstanding concern of US border law enforcement. On 14 March 2000 US Border Patrol agents encountered a Mexican army patrol in high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWVs) that crossed into an area near Santa Teresa, New Mexico, and fired two shots when challenged by US agents.² While there were no injuries, and the soldiers were eventually detained and returned to Mexico, the incident marked another benchmark in border confrontations. In addition, using the Mexican military in most varieties of law enforcement has brought charges of military abuses and the overall "militarization" of Mexico's judicial system. Many have demanded that the military withdraw

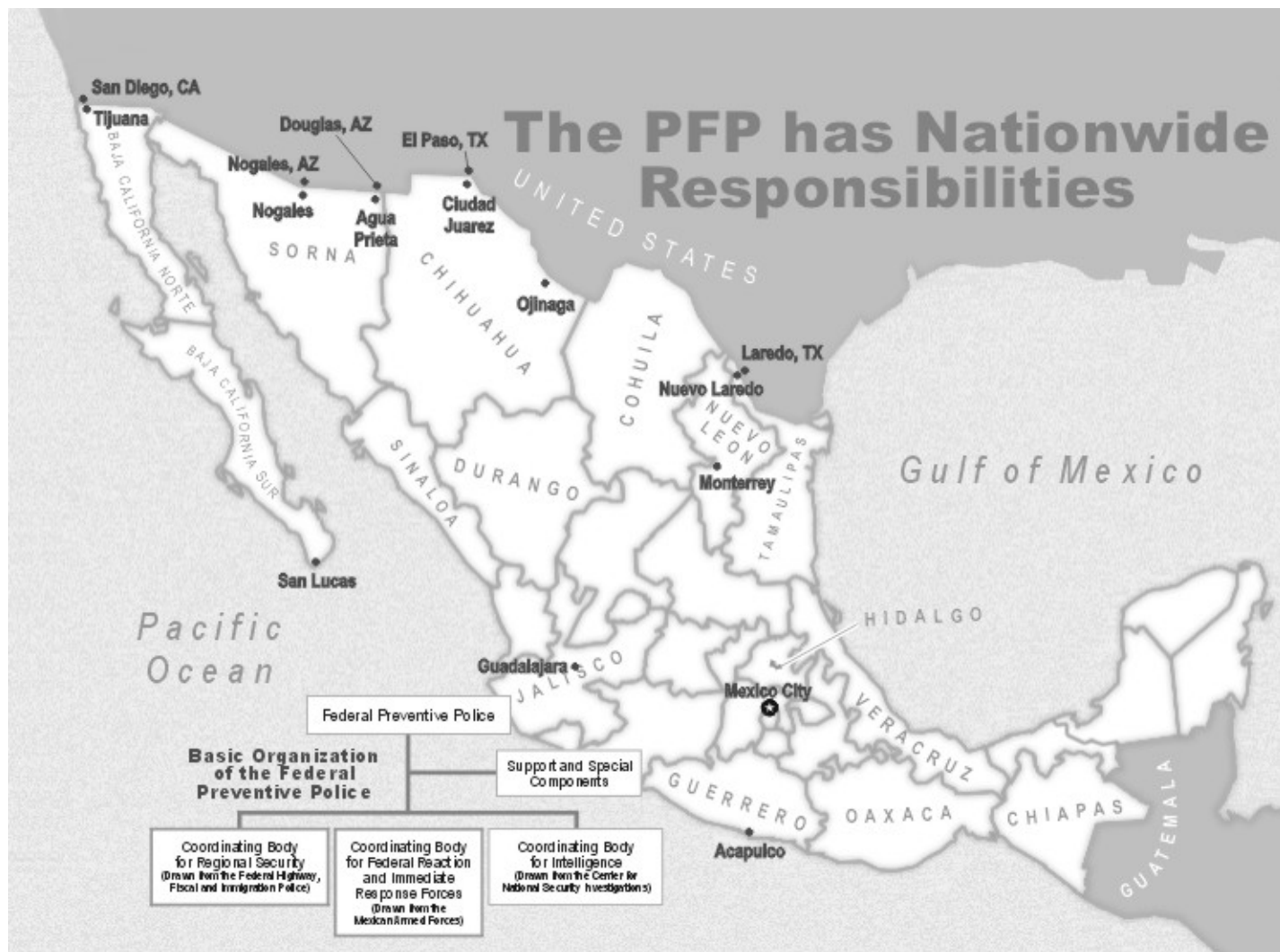
from some of these duties. Nevertheless, the Mexican government faces serious and growing security problems and requires an uncorrupted force possessing the strength and law-enforcement, intelligence gathering and legal skills to handle problems beyond the scope of normal police establishments. Mexican authorities are relying heavily on the new PFP, an organization based on a carefully considered concept.

Organizing and Fielding the PFP

One of the most ambitious new law enforcement initiatives developed at the end of the century by the Mexican government is being implemented under President Ernesto Zedillo's "National Crusade Against Crime and Delinquency." Under this effort—after much contentious discussion—the Mexican senate legislated the PFP on 11 December 1998, calling for a national law-enforcement body to combine the functions and many of the personnel of the Federal Highway Police (*Policía Federal de Caminos*), the Federal Fiscal Police (*Policía Fiscal Federal*) and the Federal Immigration Police (*Policía Migratoria Federal*). It was announced shortly thereafter that the resulting PFP would also include strong military and intelligence components.³

The PFP was made subordinate to the Interior Ministry—at the time under current presidential candidate Francisco Labastida Ochoa—and began to organize early in 1999. Its initial mission was to "safeguard the integrity and rights of persons, prevent the commission of crimes and preserve freedom, order and peace" nationally.⁴ Some 800 intelligence personnel were transferred from the Center for National Security Investigations (*Centro de Investigaciones en Seguridad Nacional*—Cisen), Mexico's principal civilian intelligence agency that has been referred to as the Mexican CIA.⁵ Under the PFP, the Cisen contingent was redesignated the Directorate for Intelligence (*Coordinación de Inteligencia*).⁶

The first designated deputy commissioner of the PFP—within months named commissioner—was Rear Admiral Wilfredo Robledo Madrid, Cisen's former technical services and protection director. Robledo was best known for his association with the capture of kidnapper Daniel "El Mochaorejas" (the Ear-Cutter) Arizmendi, and quickly indicated his intent to use the PFP to stamp out kidnapping and "pay 'special attention' to trafficking in drugs, arms and people."⁷



Initial criticism from forces opposing the decision focused on fears of a politically motivated national police that would intimidate government opponents and collect political intelligence. However, a new concern quickly replaced that criticism when it was announced that the new police body would immediately be reinforced by the 4,899 soldiers, 1,862 weapons, 352 vehicles and 99 dogs of the 3rd Military Police Brigade—the same unit that had been used during controversial patrols in Mexico City neighborhoods to combat violent street crime.⁸ Under the PFP, the military police were redesignated as the Directorate for Federal Reaction and Immediate Response Forces (*Coordinación de Fuerzas Federales de Reacción y Apoyo Inmediato*).⁹

In addition, a "special forces grouping" (*un agrupamiento de Fuerzas Especiales*) of unspecified origin but clearly a counterterrorist/hostage rescue unit was also added to the PFP.¹⁰ The 3rd Brigade soldiers were to be on a leave of absence while with the PFP, with no timeline initially given for the duration of these duties.¹¹ It later became clear that these duties would be indefinite, and testing was begun to vet military personnel fully for PFP duties before additional training and professionalization. In the meantime, they were to be under the direct command of a civilian PFP agent.¹² An unknown number of marines were also assigned to the PFP. By early September

1999, operations in a number of states indicated that PFP elements were clearly operational at some levels.¹³

These developments elicited the expected criticisms and denunciations, but none thus far has affected the decisions or their implementation. The PFP is certainly the Mexican government's chosen organization to bridge the gap between police and military forces. There is another idea, however, that continues to be raised. As early as September 1996, a group of PAN (Nation Action Party) senators, citing a provision in the constitution, proposed raising a "national guard" to deal with instability and violence.¹⁴ After the PFP had achieved initial operational status, in early September 1999 the PAN president of the Senate Defense Commission, Norberto Corella Gil Samaniego, indicated that the PAN would propose removing the Mexican armed forces from missions that were not strictly military. Among those specifically named were "health projects, education, municipal patrolling and antidrug efforts." Responsibility for these duties would rest on the legally responsible agencies and organizations, and law enforcement duties would fall to the new national guard.¹⁵ Given the momentum of PFP formation, the chances of any success for this proposal are slim—whatever its merits. Indeed, plans for further PFP development and specific intentions and missions were sent out late in fall 1999.

According to the timetable presented by Madrid, the PFP will not reach its full strength and capabilities until 2015. The road to that goal will see the current 11,000-man PFP force grow initially at the rate of about 1,000 new officers a year, reaching an end strength of 15,000 to 20,000 personnel. The new officers will be trained at the PFP academy that began operating in late November 1999.¹⁶ PFP Commissioner Wilfredo Robledo Madrid restated his belief that the PFP would be a "force of excellence" in about 10 years but still require additional time to take over law enforcement in federal areas that he said had "really been abandoned"—a candid admission that helps explain the sustained growth of violent, organized criminality that threatens Mexican stability.

Financing the force will be a key factor in its eventual success. In January 2000, some officers and other officials were still being paid by their original organizations. This problem will likely resolve as the year progresses, since the PFP budget has nearly doubled from its 1999 level.¹⁷ A key part of PFP professionalization will be the struggle against corruption, and the force is being organized with a strong internal affairs component.¹⁸



PFP personnel during the retaking of the Autonomous University of Mexico, February 2000. PFP riot police are drawn principally from PFP military police components.

Robledo made it specifically clear that the PFP was "to take over all of the preventive and policing functions that are currently performed by members of the armed forces and some members of the PGR (*Procuraduría General de la República*—Office of the Attorney General of the Republic)."¹⁹ While public statements on PFP's policing roles were seemingly comprehensive, not as much was initially said about the intelligence gathering roles (performed by Cisen) that the PFP clearly had acquired, nor about the role that the PFP was clearly playing in national counterinsurgency activities. However, the broad and specific missions directly stated—as well as those demonstrated in the first months of PFP operations—underscore the wide powers of the new force and the complex security issues it faces:

- Combat organized crime and crimes that threaten national security through investigation and direct police actions.
- Prevent crime in/on federal facilities to include highways, railways, maritime ports, airports and other federal property.
- Carry out customs policing and investigation responsibilities.

- Maintain and restore public order.
- Wage a multifaceted struggle against drug trafficking.
- Police Mexican borders to control illegal immigration, smuggling and abuses against immigrants.
- Rescue hostages and kidnap victims, and seize facilities held by illegal groups.
- Police key federal natural resource areas.
- Collect and act on intelligence dealing with subversive groups and activities to include guerrillas, terrorists and other illegal paramilitary formations.

Some specific illustrations of PFP activities around Mexico indicate the central roles that police, military and intelligence components are playing in their new national security and public safety responsibilities.

Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Preventive Policing

Early in 2000, it was unclear just how active PFP elements would be in their diverse areas of responsibility. Knowledgeable observers quickly concluded that the PFP represented "a radical turn" in Mexico's battle against drug cartels and noted that the PFP was taking on an enormous share of national counterdrug work together with the Army.²⁰ According to these observers, Mexico's counterdrug path would be similar to that of the Colombian National Police (PNC) with a focus on attacking the weakest and most visible points of the cartels' structure. The idea would be to be to disrupt and dismantle the base of the drug triangle, rather than focusing solely on the top cartel leaders. The concept's compatibility with US approaches was considered problematic. In any event, the Cisen and other investigative components of the PFP would play a central role in "issues of intelligence, information analysis and above all, detection of criminal organizations."²¹

Reports on PFP counterdrug activities certainly portray an organization actively engaged in drug interdiction, sometimes in conjunction with the army or other law enforcement organizations. For example, in early February 2000, the PFP, the army and the PGR seized a plane near Cuernavaca carrying some 443 kilos of cocaine. PFP officers have recently moved into Sinaloa State, where 564 drug- and organized-crime-related murders occurred in 1999 and where 52 people were killed in the first five weeks of 2000. The PFP is used to reinforce local law-enforcement agencies that have broken down or cannot meet their growing requirements. Drug intelligence is also a central PFP function. For example, in November 1999 the PFP began a focused drug intelligence operation aimed at high-profile drug-trafficking regions like Baja, California, which is plagued by drug-related violence. A principal aim of these operations is identifying and tracking major drug cartel figures.²²



The police chief of Tijuana was assassinated in February 2000 by presumed drug criminals who fired more than 100 AK-47 rounds into his vehicle. Such violence has led to PFP reinforcement of local police.

Many PFP activities require interagency cooperation, as illustrated in a joint operation earlier this year. The PFP formed part of a 500-man group that included PGR agents, public safety officers and public prosecutors' agents under army coordination. The interagency task force was to conduct an arms-confiscation operation in Hidalgo where two villages had a longstanding feud over land, which periodically produced armed violence. Following an attack by one village upon the other, the task force deployed to Hidalgo, and following a sweep, arrested 189 villagers and referred 17 for trial. The task force seized 29 weapons (one AK-47), 500 rounds of ammunition, and army and police uniforms.²³

Within the PFP is an exceptionally active and widely publicized antikidnapping squad. For example, in March 2000 the PFP kidnapping unit, working with the Federal Judicial Police's "Yaqi" special police group, captured the notorious and especially vicious kidnapper Marcos Tinco Gancedo, known as "El Coronel." He led five groups of kidnappers operating in several states and the Federal District and was one of Mexico's most-wanted criminals.²⁴

International crime in Mexico now involves the "Russian Mafia," a loose term describing organized crime that may be primarily Russian but also may include criminals from other former Soviet states and Eastern Europe. The PFP claims that "Russian" criminals are working with Mexicans and Canadians and have become major participants in prostitution in Mexico City, trafficking in women largely from Russia and Eastern Europe (Hungary and Slovakia). The scope of the activity can be seen in arrest statistics: dozens of such women were apprehended in the last several weeks of 1999 alone. The PFP is also investigating a Russian criminal presence at Mexico City's National Airport.²⁵

Among the varied duties falling to the PFP is the patrolling of federal areas with valuable natural resources. While undertaken at the request of the Mexican Office of the Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection (Profepa), the reasons for the PFP patrols and policing are several. On the one hand, they are intended to prevent environmental damage to sensitive areas, such as that caused by timber pirates. These areas also serve as refuges for drug traffickers. A foremost concern, however, is the high murder rate among patrolling Profera officers, who are untrained to deal with the areas' heavily armed criminals.²⁶

A Mexican Border Patrol?

The PFP acquired a number of border and port-of-entry control functions when the organization was created, many associated with the duties of the police organizations it subsumed. Additional functions have been further identified as PFP responsibilities and missions have been more specifically elaborated. For example, the PFP dispatched agents to support immigration and contraband-control operations at Tijuana's main airport—some 40 to 50 officers per shift. Particularly notable, however, was the indication in late 1999 that some agents would be detailed to US-Mexican border patrol-duties in Baja, California. In that role, they would replace the elite Beta Groups there formed earlier from personnel in various agencies. Beta Group members are selected for their good personnel records, are better paid than police officers and are subject to strict codes of conduct. The manifest border dangers have brought calls for Beta Group reinforcement and better equipment, including body armor, and the PFP replacement elements are expected to be quite well equipped.²⁸

It became clear that the PFP was to constitute a new presence on many areas of the US-Mexican border. In December 1999 it was announced that three PFP border patrol units would begin operation in Sonora state near the border town of Agua Prieta (opposite Douglas, Arizona).²⁹ In late December 1999, a 24-man PFP border patrol unit—drawn from the military components of the PFP, began operating in the Ojinaga-Juárez border region of Chihuahua state, spanning Rio Grande areas opposite El Paso, Texas, and New Mexico. The unit had 12 patrol vehicles and was characterized as "similar to the US Border Patrol."³⁰ Unlike Beta Groups, which continue to operate in a number of areas, this new PFP organization will evidently not have investigative authority but will play a major role in interdicting illegal crossers to the US from Mexico or Central America. This new program's extent is not yet clear. Apparently, however, the PFP in its various functions will come into direct contact with law-enforcement and military support elements on the US side. The PFP may eventually replace some of the Mexican military border presence.

Social Unrest

One of the most widely publicized PFP actions occurred early in February 2000 when Mexican authorities made the decision to retake portions of the campus at the Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) from strikers who had occupied campus buildings during the previous 10 months. The occupation of campus facilities began as a protest against a large tuition increase, but was soon accompanied by "plunder, theft, holding people captive, mutiny, injuring others and damaging university assets."³¹ When faculty and students attempted to return to occupied

campus areas late in January, members of the radical General Strike Council (CGH) attacked and injured 37 strike opponents. On 1 February hundreds of PFP military riot police (from the former 3rd Military Police Brigade) and explosive specialists broke through the barricades, evicted and arrested several hundred strikers, and seized homemade bombs over a 10 hour period.³² Five days later the PFP, the PGR and Federal Judicial Police cleared remaining UNAM campus facilities at other locations and executed hundreds of arrest warrants in a remarkably well done and peaceful operation by 2,500 PFP personnel. Overall, the operations were supported by most Mexicans, although some sharply criticized the government.³³ The PFP and other agencies sought to dispel widespread fear that the strike had provided the opportunity for guerrillas such as the Popular Revolutionary Army (*Ejército Popular Revolucionario*—EPR) and (*Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo Insurgente*—ERPI) to establish a stronger urban presence in Mexico City.³⁴ However, recent guerrilla attacks in the Mexican capital suggest that the EPR, ERPI and other groups may have successfully transitioned from insurgencies based in remote southern states to urban presences capable of at least nuisance attacks on military and police facilities.

Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism

A noted opposition commentator and harsh critic of the Mexican government, Carlos Ramirez has recently criticized the Cisen's failure to track real subversive groups, while performing illegal domestic political intelligence duties on behalf of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).³⁵ Despite his assertion, the Cisen elements transferred to the PFP now intensely track activities of the primary guerrilla groups. These groups include the most publicized Zapatista National Liberation Army (*Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*—EZLN), and the smaller, more dangerous and militarily active EPR and ERPI. Other groups have announced their existence as well, including the recently appearing Villist Revolutionary Army of the People (*Ejército Villista Revolucionario del Pueblo*—EVRP) and the somewhat-older Revolutionary Armed Forces of the People (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionario del Pueblo*—FARP). The latter two have punctuated their presence with March 2000 attacks on PFP, Cisen and army facilities.³⁶

Amid these new developments, PFP roles in counterinsurgency have slowly emerged for public view. During its first year in 1999 a sizeable PFP force of several hundred conducted security operations purportedly aimed to protect Chiapas residents from violent assaults such as the massacre of 45 indigenous peasants in December 1997 at the Chiapas community Acteal. The Acteal massacre was perpetrated not by guerrillas but by paramilitaries—with the complicity of local authorities—and has been followed by continued violence and assaults on a lesser scale.³⁷ The PFP, the army and other intelligence-gathering agencies are tracking EZLN leaders and activities. A large PFP contingent—wearing black-and-gray uniforms, carrying assault rifles and deploying on the outskirts of Tuxtla Gutierrez—reportedly brought "squad cars, helicopters, armored vehicles and [unspecified] advanced weaponry" and were tasked to reinforce so-called "red centers" (*focas rojas*) where trouble was anticipated.³⁸ The PFP has also been patrolling roads (sometimes in armored vehicles) in Guerrero and Oaxaca to prevent highway assaults. These are areas where the EPR and ERPI are especially active, and PFP agents and other personnel are frequently used to reinforce local authorities around the country when trouble is anticipated.

PFP agents clearly have a role in tracking down and arresting suspected insurgents and often are present when their arrests are publicized. In October 1999, for example, the PFP and the Guerrero Attorney General's Office jointly announced the capture of ERPI insurgents to include "Comman-dante Antonio" (Jacobo Silva Nogales), purported head of the organization.³⁹ A particular interest, according to the PFP director, is the nexus between crime and the guerrillas. In this regard, the PFP thinks that kidnapping for ransom is a major undertaking of the EPR and ERPI, who support their operations with the funds.

The heart of the PFP counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations lies with the Cisen components that were transferred to the new organization. This component actually formed in 1994 under Cisen as a response to the EZLN uprising in Chiapas. Initially designated the GAT—*Gruppa Antiterrorista*—it quickly helped integrate activities of the various security agencies. Weekly interagency meetings assessed strategic threats around the country, especially to key infrastructure targets from bombs and other attacks. As it grew and assumed new responsibilities, such as kidnappings, arms trafficking and organized crime, the GAT eventually became the Inter-Institutional Coordination Unit-GAT—or UCIDGAT as it became known in its Spanish acronym. That body transferred from the Cisen in 1999 and became the core of the PFP's subversive and criminal intelligence effort.⁴⁰

The PFP's antsubversive duties have made the new force a target. At about 0300 hours on 15 March 2000, the EVRP attacked PFP facilities in the Mexican Federal District with electronically fired 60mm mortars. Two rounds were fired, damaging a PFP building and a similar attack occurred later against a military airbase.⁴¹ Simultaneously, the PFP acknowledged the EPR and ERPI's presence in Mexico City.⁴² These groups had expressed solidarity with UNAM strikers and stated their intention to disrupt the July 2000 presidential elections.

PFP Corruption

The past years have amply demonstrated that endemic corruption plagues every Mexican police establishment. From all outside appearances, the PFP is making a serious effort to ensure that new recruits have the requisite levels of honesty and is rooting out corrupt serving officers. This extraordinarily difficult undertaking is reflected in the current status of internal PFP investigations. Notably, by February 2000 PFP agents in multiple states were being investigated for "crimes related to drug trafficking, illegal alien smuggling and stealing from transport vehicles."⁴³ Of these, the illegal alien smuggling case seemed to be the most extensive, potentially involving a national-level undertaking with participants from the PFP and other police agencies. Reducing corruption clearly contributes to the 15-year time table for the PFP to reach its maximum capability, a more realistic estimate than some previous Mexican anticorruption campaigns that projected short-term results.

Mexico is placing exceptional trust and weight on the performance and effectiveness of the PFP. It is no exaggeration to say that the law enforcement and internal security dimensions of Mexico's future stability are tied to the PFP's ability to perform critically important policing and security missions. At the same time, the PFP must be effective enough to free the military from highly visible public safety duties



Military elements inspect cargo as part of their civil law enforcement role.

that erode its public confidence. Amid the challenges posed by a spectrum of criminal and subversive threats to Mexico, the PFP—like the military—will have to struggle successfully against the drug corruption that has crippled other federal, state and local police establishments in Mexico. In addition, the nature of PFP duties raises the specter of human rights violations in areas like Chiapas, Oaxac and Guerrero, an issue that the Mexican Government acknowledges but has yet to fully address.

The strong presence of the PFP along the US-Mexican border will place a premium on cooperation between US and Mexican law enforcement—particularly in light of incidents like the armed encounter earlier this year between a Mexican military counterdrug force and the US Border Patrol. While the PFP is going to be essential for Mexico's future security, it is also very important to the United States. The PFP's failure to provide security will have grave US repercussions in the areas of drug trafficking, illegal immigration and the spillover of other criminal enterprise or even political violence. Of particular immediate concern is the threat of political violence in the upcoming July elections.⁴⁴ While guerrilla groups are not strong enough to challenge the government, recent events suggest that they might hinder a smooth electoral process. In all, PFP activities over the summer of 2000 may affect both Mexico and the United States, shaping the future direction of security cooperation.

1. For a recent assessment of Mexican instability focusing on new insurgency developments, see Carlos Ramirez, "Multiple Instability Indications Cited," *El Universal*, 24 March 2000. See also Graham H. Turbiville, Jr., "US-Mexico Border Security: Civil-Military Cooperation," *Military Review* (July-August 1999), 29-39; and "Mexico's Other Insurgents," *Military Review* (May-June 1997), 81-89.

2. According to Mexican and US reporting, on the night of 14 March two Mexican army HMMVWs crossed the US border in New Mexico just west of El Paso, Texas. When

encountered by US Border Patrol personnel, one HMMVW crossed quickly back to Mexico. Two shots were fired from the other without effect; however, nine Mexican soldiers were subsequently detained by the Border Patrol. The nine soldiers—that Mexican authorities said were part of a newly-arrived counterdrug force not familiar with the border region—were eventually allowed to return to Mexico with their vehicle and arms. The incident was characterized by both sides as "unfortunate" or "regrettable," and clearly underscored the increasing dangers of surprise encounters by armed groups that could be law enforcement, military, drug traffickers, illegal aliens, or local residents. For accounts and commentary from both sides of the border, see "Detiene la Patrulla Fronteriza a nueve soldados mexicanos," *La Jornada*, 16 March 2000; Nancy San Martin, "Top Brass Pays a Call on Ft. Bliss," *Dallas Morning News*, 21 March 2000; STRATFOR, "Incident on the Border," 22 March 2000, received via Internet at URL < and *El Universal*, 17 March 2000, as translated in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) LAP2000317000070. It may also be recalled that in November 1999, a US Marine was detained by Mexican authorities for two weeks in a Tijuana jail when he accidentally crossed into Mexico with two privately owned firearms. See Tony Perry, "Marine Jailed in Mexico Is Released," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 November 1999.

3. Jorge Camargo, "Senate Approves PFP Legislation," *Reforma*, 12 December 1998, as translated in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) FTS19981215001392. Under the PFP, the three police bodies became the Directorate for Regional Security (*Coordinación de Seguridad Regional*). See José Reveles, "Creceá hasta 20 mil elementos la Policía Federal Preventiva," *El Financiero*, 11 December 1999.

4. Francisco Labastida Ochoa, who is a presidential candidate for the July 2000 elections, was replaced in May 1999 by the former governor of Oaxaca and Labastida political supporter, Diodoro Carrasco Altamirano.

5. "Agentes del Cisen se integrarán a la Policía Federal Preventiva," *La Jornada*, 1 April 1999.

6. José Reveles, "Creceá hasta 20 mil elementos la Policía Federal Preventiva."

7. "Robledo on PFP Development Timeline," *Reforma*, 13 September 1999, as translated in FBIS FTS19990915001575.

8. "Riesgos de militarizar las policías," *La Jornada*, 9 July 1999; and José Reveles, "Creceá hasta 20 mil elementos la Policía Federal Preventiva," *El Financiero*, 11 November 1999.

9. José Reveles, "Creceá hasta 20 mil elementos la Policía Federal Preventiva."

10. Jesús Aranda, "La Sedena apoyará a la Policía Federal Preventiva" *La Jornada*, 8 July 1999.

11. "Terms of Sedena, PFP Transfer Cited," *Reforma*, 16 July 1999, as translated in FBIS FTS19990716001702.

12. "Details of Sedena—PFP Transfer," *Reforma*, 9 July 1999, as translated in FBIS FTS19990709001546; "Robledo on PFP Development Timeline;" and Hugo Martinez

McNaught, "PFP Plans to 2015 Revealed," *Reforma*, 19 November 1999, as translated in FBIS FTS19991119001686.

13. Ignacio Juárez Galindo, "Trabjará en conjunto con diferentes corporaciones: En breve, la Policía Federal Preventiva iniciará actividades en Puebla," *La Jornada*, 1 September 1999.

14. Ismael Romero, "Guardia Nacional, Propone el PAN," *La Jornada*, 18 September 1996.

15. Olga Valenzuela, "The PAN suggests that Federal Departments Should Fulfill Their Responsibilities," *La Jornada*, 4 September 1999, as translated by Leslie Lopez (Chiapas-L electronic message, 4 September 1999).

16. Hugo Martinez McNaught, "PFP Plans," Robledo indicated that in mid-November 1999 there were precisely 10,699 personnel already in the PFP.

17. "Federal Preventive Police Officials Fail Comptroller's Office," *Reforma*, 11 January 2000, as translated in FBIS FTS20000111001704. In 1999 the PFP was budgeted for 1,704 billion pesos, an amount that will increase to 3.104 billion pesos in 2000. See *Reforma*, 13 November 1999, as translated in FBIS FTS19991117001642..

18. To help screen new recruits and those police or military personnel assigned to the PFP from other agencies, PFP officers administer a 44-item questionnaire that asks about attitudes to the formation of the PFP, willingness to take polygraph tests, past drug and alcohol use and sexual orientation. "Federal Preventive Police Hopefuls Tested," *Mural*, 22 January 2000, as translated in FBIS FTS20000124002017.

19. Hugo Martinez McNaught, "PFP Plans."

20. Perspectives are those of PAN Senator Francisco Molina Ruiz, who once headed Mexico's now disbanded National Institute for Combating Drugs (INCD), the body principally charged with Mexican drug enforcement. See "Molina Concerns Over New Antidrug Tack," *El Universal*, 5 January 2000, as translated in FNIS FTS20000105001386.

21. Ibid.

22. "PFP To Fight Drug Trafficking in BC," *El Universal*, 25 November 1999, as translated in FBIS FTS19991126001375.

23. Javier Peralta, "Move to Confiscate Arms in Hidalgo," *Reforma*, 28 January 2000, as translated in FBIS FTS20000129000527.

24. "Most Wanted Kidnapper Arrested," *El Universal*, 29 March 2000.

25. "Rusian Mafia Trafficking Women," *Reforma*, 19 December 1999, as translated in FBIS FTS19991220001664.

26. "Federal Preventive Police to Patrol Areas Containing Natural Resources," *El Universal*, 18 February 2000, as translated in FBIS LAP2000218000064.

27. "PFP To Fight Drug Trafficking in BC."

28. A Grupo Beta Sur (South Beta Group) has also been established on Mexico's southern border in Chiapas. See Nancy Nusser, "Special Police Unit Aims to Crack Down on Illegal Migrant Abuse," *Cox News Service*, 23 November 1996, received via Internet, for more on the 35-man Grupo Beta Sur and its activities. Jorge Alberto Cornejo, 'Aplica México plan para proteger derechos de centroamericanos,' *La Jornada*, 23 May 1996.

29. "Federal Preventive Police Arrives in Agua Prieta," *El Imparcial*, 23 December 1999, as translated in FBIS FTS19991223001273.

30. Ruebén Villalpando and Jorge Cornejo, "Se ubica en la región de Ciudad Juárez y Ojinaga," *La Jornada*, 8 January 2000.

31. "Secretary, Attorney General on University Campus Takeover," XEW Television Network, 1519 GMT and 1556 GMT, 6 February 2000, as translated by FBIS FTS20000206001411.

32. "PFP Active in Retaking UNAM Preparatory," *Reforma*, 2 February 2000, as translated in FBIS FTS20000202001591.

33. Among other voluminous reporting on these PFP operations, see Carlos Ramirez, "Aspects, Costs of UNAM Action Viewed," *El Universal*, 7 February 2000, as translated in FBIS FTS20000208000028; Alberto Martinez, Pablo Cesar Carrillo and Francisco Velazquez, "PFP Holding 3 Retaken UNAM Sites," *Reforma*, 27 January 2000, as translated in FBIS FTS20000127001699; and "FBIS Mexico Press Highlights," 7 February 2000, as compiled and translated in FBIS FTS20000207000842.

34. José de Cordoba, "U.S. Sees Rebels Posing a Threat to Mexican Vote," *Wall Street Journal*, 14 February 2000.

35. Carlos Ramirez, "Misused Cisen Functions Claimed," *El Universal*, 30 March 2000, as translated in FBIS LAP20000330000075.

36. Carlos Ramirez, "Multiple Instability Indications," *El Universal*, 30 March 2000, as translated in FBIS LAP20000330000075.

37. Amnesty International, "Mexico: The Acteal massacre—one year on and still no justice," News Service: 248/98, AI INDEX: AMR 41/43/98, 18 December 1998.

38. "Hundreds of Federal Preventive Police Agents Arrive in Chiapas," *La Jornada*, 23 December 1999, as translated in FBIS FTS19991223001273.

39. Luis Guillermo Hernandez, "ERPI Commander, Others Arrested 22 October," *Reforma*, 25 October 1999, as translated in FBIS FTS19991025001741

40. José Reveles, "Creceá hasta 20 mil elementos la Policía Federal Preventiva."

41. A reported attack—or attempted attack since the actual course of events is disputed by the military—was directed against the Santa Lucia Air Base, Mexico State. During the 1720 March period, troops are thought to have found at least three explosive devices similar to those used against the PFP. The Villist Revolutionary Army of the People (EVRP) reportedly claimed responsibility. See *La Jornada* 21 March 2000, as translated in FBIS LAP20000321000079.

42. Carlos Ramirez, "Multiple Instability Indications."

43. "Federal Preventive Police Agents Investigated," *El Universal*, 1 February 2000, as translated in FBIS FTS20000201001120.

44. A PAN victory in the election could well derail the PFP as well, since PAN political leaders have suggested other alternatives.

Graham H. Turbiville Jr. is the director, Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He received a B.A. from Southern Illinois University, an M.A. From George Washington University and a Ph.D. from the University of Montana. He formerly served as chief of the Soviet/Warsaw Pact Strategic Operations Branch, Defense Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C. His contributions to Military Review include "Operations Other Than War: Organized Crime Dimension," published in January 1994; "The Chechen Ethno-Religious Conflict, Terrorism and Crime," published in March 1994; "OOTW in the Asia-Pacific Theater," published in April 1994; "The Changing Security Environment," published in May-June 1997; and "Mexico's Other Insurgents," published in May-June 1997. His most recent article, "US-Mexican Border Security: Civil-Military Cooperation," appeared in the July-August 1999 issue of Military Review.

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Military Police Assume PFP Roles

The 3d Military Police Brigade was used prominently in the mid-late 1990s to conduct anticrime duties in Mexico Federal District neighborhoods. During this period, deployments began in the 1.4 million-resident Iztapalapa section of the greater Mexico City area. Troops were to rotate every 2-3 months through the 16 designated neighborhoods of the metropolitan area over the next 32 months, in an effort to allow regular police to be absent during sweeping professionalization programs, without unduly compromising security for affected residents. This program established a visible security presence in crime-ridden areas but nevertheless generated

considerable controversy over the "militarization" of law enforcement. The 3d Brigade is now part of the PFP and takes part in a range of missions to include those associated with counterinsurgency.



The proliferation of armed groups claiming to be guerrillas has been a feature of Mexican life since the appearance of the Zapatistas in January 1994. A number of these like the EPR and ERPI have demonstrated their capability to conduct ambushes and attacks on military and police elements. While much of the guerrilla activity has been centered in the southern and southeastern states of Mexico, an organization claiming to "represent the forces of the people's insurgency for national liberation in the north of Mexico" has recently appeared.

The Villista Front for National Liberation (*Frente Villista de Liberación Nacional*—FVLN), asserts that it is not an armed group but rather speaks in behalf of an agenda demanding a broad range of reforms and a "new popular transitional government in Mexico." The accompanying poster art—with stylized M-16 and AK-47 held by the female and male guerrillas—appears on the FVLN website at <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1932>



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Photos:

Ejercito y Fuerza Aerea Mexicanos

Ulises Castellanos, *Proceso*

Octavio Gomez, *Proceso*